

FREEDOM FROM SIN.

Dr. Talmage Depicts Struggle of Man Who Desires Liberation.

Takes Text from Proverbs and Shows the Good Angel and the Bad Angel Striving for Victory Over the Soul.

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In this discourse Dr. Talmage depicts the struggle of a man who desires liberation from the enthrallment of evil and shows how he may be set free; text, Proverbs 23:35: "When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

With an insight into human nature such as no other man ever had Solomon in these words is sketching the mental processes of a man who has stepped aside from the path of rectitude and would like to return. Wishing for something better, he says: "When shall I awake? When shall I get over this horrible nightmare of iniquity?" But, seized upon by an unreluctant appetite and pushed down hill by his passions, he cries out: "I will seek it yet again. I will try it once more!"

About a mile from Princeton, N. J., there is a skating pond. One winter day, when the ice was very thin, a farmer living near by warned the young men of the danger of skating at that time. They all took the warning except one young man. He in the spirit of bravado, said: "Boys, one round more." He struck out on his skates, the ice broke, and his lifeless body was brought up. And in all matters of temptation and allurements it is not a prolongation that is proposed, but only just one more indulgence, just one more sin. Then comes the fatality. Alas, for the one round more! "I will seek it yet again."

Our libraries are adorned with elegant literature addressed to young men pointing out to them all the dangers and perils of life—complete maps of the voyage of life—the shoals, the rocks, the quicksands. But suppose a young man is already shipwrecked, suppose he is already off the track, suppose he has already gone astray, how can he get back? That is a question that remains unanswered, and amid all the books of the libraries I find not one word on that subject. To that class of persons I this day address myself.

You compare what you are now with what you were three or four years ago, and you are greatly disheartened. You are ready with every passion of your soul to listen to a discussion like this. Be of good cheer! Your best days are yet to come. I offer you the hand of welcome and rescue. I put the silver trumpet of the gospel to my lips and blow one long, loud blast, saying: "Whosoever will, let him come, and let him come now." The church of God is ready to spread a banquet upon your return, and all the hierarchs of Heaven fall into line of banded procession over your redemption.

Years ago, and while yet Albert Barnes was living, I preached in his pulpit one night to the young men of Philadelphia. In the opening of my discourse I said: "O Lord, give me one soul to-night!" At the close of the service Mr. Barnes introduced a young man saying: "This is the young man you prayed for." But I see now it was too limited a prayer.

So far as God may help me I propose to show what are the obstacles to your return and how you are to surmount those obstacles. The first difficulty in the way of your return is the force of moral gravitation. Just as there is a natural law which brings down to earth anything you throw into the air, so there is a corresponding moral gravitation. I never shall forget a prayer I heard a young man make in the Young Men's Christian association of New York. With trembling voice and streaming eyes he said: "O God Thou knowest how easy it is for me to do wrong and how hard it is for me to do right! God help me!" That man knows not his own heart who has never felt the power of moral gravitation.

In your boyhood you had good associates and bad associates. Which most impressed you? During the last few years you have heard pure anecdotes and impure anecdotes. Which the easiest stuck in your memory? You have had good habits and bad habits. To which did your soul more easily yield? But that moral gravitation may be resisted. Just as you may pick up anything from the earth and hold it in your hand toward heaven, just so, by the power of God's grace, a fallen soul may be lifted toward peace, toward pardon, toward salvation. The force of moral gravitation is in every one of us, but also power in God's grace to overcome that force.

The next thing in the way of your return is the power of evil habit. I know there are those who say it is very easy for them to give up evil habits. I cannot believe them. Here is a man given to intoxication, who knows it is disgracing his family, destroying his property and ruining his body, mind and soul. If that man, an intelligent man and loving his family, could give up that habit, would he not do so? The fact that he does not give it up proves that it is hard to give it up. It is a very easy thing to sail down stream, the tide carrying you with great force; but suppose you turn the boat up stream, is it so easy then to row it? As long as we yield to the evil inclinations in our heart and to our bad habits we are sailing down stream, but the moment we try to turn we put our boat in the rapids

just above Niagara and try to row up stream.

A physician tells his patient that he must quit the use of tobacco, as it is destroying his health. The man replies: "I can stop that habit easy enough." He quits the use of the weed. He goes around not knowing what to do with himself. He cannot add up a column of figures; he cannot sleep nights. It seems as if the world had turned upside down. He feels his business is going to ruin. Where he was kind and obliging he is scolding and fretful. The composure that characterized him has given way to a fretful restlessness, and he has become a complete fidget. What power is it that has rolled a wave of woe over the earth and shaken a portent in the heavens? He has quit tobacco. After awhile he says: "I am going to do as I please. The doctor does not understand my case. I am going back to my old habits." And he returns. Everything assumes its usual composure. His business seems to brighten. The world becomes an attractive place to live in. His children, seeing the difference, hail the return of their father's genial disposition. What wave of color has dashed blue into the sky, and greenness into the mountain foliage, and the glow of sapphire into the sunset? What enchantment has lifted a world of beauty and joy on his soul? He has resumed tobacco.

The fact is, we all know in our own experience that habit is a taskmaster. As long as we obey it it does not chastise us; but let us resist, and we find that we are lashed with scorpion whips and bound with ship cable and thrown into the track of bone-breaking juggernauts.

Suppose a man of five or ten or twenty years of evil-doing resolves to do right, why are all the forces of darkness allied against him? He gets down on his knees in the midnight and cries: "God help me!" He bites his lip. He grinds his teeth. He clinches his fist in a determination to keep to his purpose. He dare not look at the bottles in the window of a wine store. It is one long, bitter, exhaustive, hand-to-hand fight with inflamed, tantalizing, merciless habit. When he thinks he is entirely free, the old inclination pounces upon him like a pack of hounds, all their muzzles tearing away at the flanks of one poor reinder.

In Paris there is a sculptured representation of Bacchus, the god of revelry. He is riding on a panther at full leap. Oh, how suggestive! Let every one who is speeding on bad ways understand he is not riding a docile and well-broken steed, but that he is riding a monster wild and bloodthirsty and going at a death leap.

I have also to say if a man wants to return from evil practices society repulses him. The prodigal, wishing to return, tries to take some professor of religion by the hand. The professor of religion looks at him, looks at the faded apparel and the marks of dissipation, and instead of giving him a firm grip of the hand offers him the tip end of the longer fingers of the left hand, which is equal to striking a man in the face. Oh, how few Christian people understand how much gospel there is in a good, honest handshaking! Sometimes when you have felt the need of encouragement and some Christian man has taken you heartily by the hand, have you not felt thrilling through every fiber of your body, mind and soul an encouragement that was just what you needed?

The prodigal, wishing to get into good society, enters a prayer meeting. Some good man without much sense greets him by saying: "Why, are you here? You are about the last person that I expected to see in a prayer meeting. Well, the dying thief was saved, and there is hope for you." You do not know anything about this unless you have learned that when a man tries to return from evil courses of conduct he runs against repulsions innumerable.

I think, also, that men are often hindered from returning by the fact that churches are anxious about their membership, too anxious about their denomination, and they rush out when they see a man about to give up sin and return to God and ask him how he is going to be baptized—whether by sprinkling or immersion—and what kind of a church he is going to join. It is a poor time to talk about Presbyterianism and Episcopal liturgies and Methodist love feasts and Baptist immersions when a man is about to come out of the darkness of sin into the glorious light of the Gospel.

Why, it reminds me of a man drowning in the sea, and a lifeboat puts out for him, and the man in the boat says to the man in the water: "Now, if I get you ashore, are you going to live in my street?" First get him ashore, and then talk to him about the nonessentials of religion. Who cares what church he joins if he only joins Christ and starts for Heaven? Oh, you, my brother of illumined face and a hearty grip for every one that tries to turn from his evil way, take hold of the same hymn-book with him, though his dissipation shake the book, remembering that he that "converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins."

Now, I have shown you these obstacles because I want you to understand I know all the difficulties in the way. But I am now going to tell you how Hannibal may scale the Alps and how the shackles may be unriveted and how the paths of virtue forsaken may be regained. First of all, throw yourself on God. Go to Him frankly and earnestly and tell Him these habits you have and ask Him, if there is any help in all the resources of omnipotent love, to give it to you. Do not go on with a long rignarole, which some people call prayer, made up of

ohs and ahs and forever and forever amens! Go to God and cry for help.

I remember that in the civil war I was at Antietam, with other members of the Christian commission, to look after the wounded. I went into the hospital after the battle, and I said to a man: "Where are you hurt?" He made no answer, but held up his arm, swollen and splintered. I saw where he was hurt. The simple fact is, when a man has a wounded soul all he has to do is to hold it up before a sympathetic Lord and get it healed. It does not take any long prayer. Just hold up the wound. It is no small thing when a man is nervous and weak and exhausted, coming from his evil ways, to feel that God puts two omnipotent arms about him and says:

"Young man, I will stand by you. The mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but I will never fail you." And then, as the soul thinks the news is too good to be true and cannot believe it and looks up in God's face, God lifts His right hand and takes an affidavit, makes an oath, saying: "As I live," saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Blessed be God for such Gospel as this! "Cut the slices thin," says the wife to the husband, "for there will not be enough to go around for all the children. Cut the slices thin." Blessed be God, there is a full loaf for every one that wants it. Bread and enough to spare! No thin slices on the Lord's table!

I remember that while living in Philadelphia, at the time I spoke of a minute ago, the Master Street hospital was opened, and a telegram was received, saying: "There will be 300 wounded men to-night. Please take care of them." From my church there went out 20 or 30 men and women. As the poor, wounded men were brought in no one asked them from what state they came or what was their parentage. There was a wounded soldier, and the only question was how to take off the rags most gently and put on the cool bandage and administer the cordial. And when a soul comes to God He does not ask where you came from or what your ancestry was. Healing balm for all your wounds; pardon for all your guilt; comfort for all your troubles!

Then, also, I counsel you, if you want to get back, quit all your bad associates. One unlovely intimacy will fill your soul with moral distemper. In all the ages of the church there has not been an instance where a man kept one evil associate and was reformed—among the 1,600,000,000 of the race, not one instance. Give up your bad companions or give up heaven. It is not ten bad companions that destroy a man nor five bad companions nor three, but one.

What chance is there for the young man I saw along the street, four or five young men with him, in front of a grog-shop, urging him to go in, he resisting vehemently, resisting, until, after awhile they forced him to go in? It was a summer night, and the door was left open, and I saw the process. They held him fast, and they put the cap to his lips, and they forced down the strong drink. What chance is there for such a young man?

I counsel you also to seek Christian advice. Every Christian man is bound to help you. If he declines to help you, he is not a Christian. Now gather up all your energies of body, mind and soul, and, appealing to God for success, declare this day everlasting war against all evil influences. A half world will amount to nothing; it must be a Waterloo. Shrink back now and you are lost. Push on and you are saved. A Spartan general fell at the very moment of victory, but he dipped his finger in his own blood and wrote on a rock near which he was dying: "Sparta has conquered." Though your struggle to get rid of sin may seem to be almost a death struggle, you can dip your finger in your own blood and write on the Rock of Ages: "Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Some one said to a Grecian general: "What was the proudest moment of your life?" He thought a moment and said: "The proudest moment was when I sent word home to my parents that I had gained the victory." And the gladdest and most brilliant moment in your life will be the moment when you can send word to your parents that you have conquered the evil habits by the grace of God and become eternal victors.

Oh, despite not parental anxiety! The time will come when you will have neither father nor mother, and you will go around the place where they used to watch you and find them gone from the house and gone from the field and gone from the neighborhood. Cry as loud for forgiveness as you may over the mound in the churchyard, they cannot answer. Dead! Dead! And then you will take out the white lock of hair that was cut from your mother's brow just before she buried her, and you will take the cane with which your father used to walk, and you will think and think and wish that you had done just as they wanted you and would give the world if you had never thrust a pang through their dear old hearts.

God pity the young man who has brought disgrace on his father's name! God pity the young man who has broken his mother's heart! Better that he had never been born. Better if in the first hour of his life, instead of being laid against the warm bosom of maternal tenderness, he had been confined and sepulchered. There is no balmy power enough to heal the heart of one who has brought parents to a sorrowful grave and who wanders about through the dismal cemetery crying: "Mother, mother!" Oh, that to-day, by all the memories of the past and by all the hopes of the future, you would yield your heart to God! May your father's God and your mother's God be your God forever!

CONGRESSMEN AND MOURNING

All Would Have Worn Grief Fifty Years Ago for President's Death.

"Fifty years ago members of congress and of the senate would have been compelled by public opinion to wear grief on their arms for 30 days after the death of a president," remarked an ex-member who had served before the civil war, according to the New York Times.

"Up to about 1850, whenever a member of congress died the resolution of sympathy with his family invariably carried with it a provision that members should wear mourning. Deaths of members were of course less frequent, for the congressional body was numerically smaller. Indeed, the increase of the membership, which led naturally to a higher death rate, was the direct cause of abolishing the custom."

"A number of members of congress now die every year, and it was not thought advisable to keep members of the house and senate in practically perpetual mourning."

An Austrian "Accident." Among the "accidents" reported in Austria recently was the case of a workman who walked along the road smoking a pipe, with a 50-pound bag of gunpowder on his back!

MARKET REPORTS.

Cincinnati Nov. 11.			
CATTLE—Common	2 50	@	3 35
Choice butchers	5 25	@	5 50
CALVES—Extra		@	6 25
HOGS—Select shippers	5 60	@	5 70
Mixed packers	5 30	@	5 55
SHEEP—Extra	2 90	@	3 00
LAMBS—Extra	4 40	@	4 50
FLOUR—Spring pat	3 80	@	4 05
WHEAT—No. 2 red		@	70 1/4
CORN—No. 2 mixed		@	65
OATS—No. 2 mixed		@	42 1/4
RYE—No. 2		@	60
HAY—Ch. Timothy		@	13 25
LARD—Steam		@	8 45
PORK—Family		@	15 00
BUTTER—Ch. dairy		@	12
Choice creamery		@	25
APPLES—Choice	4 00	@	4 50
POTATOES	2 50	@	2 60
Sweet potatoes	1 85	@	2 00
TOBACCO—New	8 25	@	10 75
Old	12 25	@	12 50
Chicago.			
FLOUR—Win. patent	3 50	@	3 60
WHEAT—No. 2 red		@	74 1/4
No. 3 spring	71	@	71 1/4
CORN—No. 2		@	60 1/2
OATS—No. 2	40 1/2	@	41 1/2
RYE—No. 2		@	60 1/2
PORK—Mess	13 85	@	13 90
LARD—Steam	8 57 1/2	@	8 90
New York.			
FLOUR—Win. patent	3 50	@	3 55
WHEAT—No. 2 red		@	83 1/2
CORN—No. 2 mixed		@	67 1/2
OATS—No. 2 mixed		@	47 1/2
RYE—Western		@	47 1/2
PORK—Family		@	17 00
LARD—Steam		@	8 85
Baltimore.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red	72 1/4	@	72 3/4
Southern	68	@	77
CORN—No. 2 mixed		@	64 1/4
OATS—No. 2 mixed	44	@	45
CATTLE—Butchers	5 00	@	5 25
HOGS—Western	6 60	@	6 65
Louisville.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red		@	72
CORN—No. 2 mixed		@	66 1/2
OATS—No. 2 mixed		@	44
PORK—Mess		@	14 50
LARD—Steam		@	8 75
Indianapolis.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red		@	72
CORN—No. 2 mixed		@	60 1/2
OATS—No. 2 mixed		@	40

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